



Guidelines for Churches working with Schools

The Opportunities:

- **After-school programs:** volunteers to run a variety of enrichment programs such as computers, chess, arts/crafts, drama, puppets, photography, science, etc.
- **Mentoring:** one-on-one supportive relationship with student, usually an hour a week.
- **Tutoring:** helping a student with a particular subject, i.e. reading or math, one hour a week.
- **Classroom assistants:** helping a teacher prepare materials and work with students in class.
- **Coaching:** Soccer, basketball, volleyball, baseball, running, wrestling, etc.
- **Events:** fundraisers, parent-teacher activities, fun runs, sports, health fairs, BBQs, etc.
- **Business Partner.** A church can be an official school business partner, providing annual resources (in-kind, monetary, volunteers).

The Ground Rules:

- People of faith are in the schools to serve, not proselytize. Humility, integrity, and stewardship.
- We do what the school asks; we volunteer to help; we come without hidden agendas.
- We *are* able to equate our servanthood with our faith and our congregational affiliations.
- If a child, parent or teacher asks why we are there, we can answer honestly (yet briefly).
- We are not there to recruit people to our church; if a child asks to come, that would need to be worked out with school officials and parents, as appropriate.
- Faith-based activities and/or events may be appropriate after school, evenings or weekends. This is best explored after a solid relationship has been established.

How to make contact:

- Look to the school nearest your church, or where you feel there's the greatest connection.
- Contact the principal, counselor or a teacher you might know. (Or SLF!) Set up a meeting.
- Don't offer programs or materials; simply ask, "What can our congregation do to help the school / staff / students / families?"
- Find one point person; aim for at least 5 people in a team ('lone rangers' get lonely, burned out).
- Keep showing up; don't get discouraged easily; keep asking "how can we help?"
- Consider opening your building to kids and families in the school neighborhood you're in.

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